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Sex Trafficking

Intro

While not typically researched, sex trafficking is a heavy topic that is prevalent to society. The market for it is huge and contrary to popular belief, does not just affect developing countries. Through preliminary research, it was quite common to find that in areas where conflict is rampant that trafficking cases are also proportionally high as well. Which thus begs the question, what causes trafficking to be so influenced by armed conflict in an area, if there even is a reason? As I delve further into the paper, I plan to answer the question of what is the extent of the influence that armed conflict holds over sex trafficking and how certain variables play into the cycle. There is also a disclaimer that must be addressed before continuing to read this paper. Due to the conservative beliefs surrounding sex in the South Asian community and the stigma that is prevalent regarding women and their sexual liberties, many governments will attempt to either hide the truth of sexual violence committed during conflict, or will modify data in order to place them [the government] in the best light possible. Therefore, it is only safe to assume that some of the research cited below in the paper have been compromised, though there have been extensive research prepared in order to avoid a situation where that occurs.

Background

In order to fully comprehend my argument, a preliminary situation needs to be set up. The first step of doing so will be to define what the term *sex trafficking* and *armed conflict* mean.

According to the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2017¹, sex trafficking is defined as the “recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision, obtaining, patronizing or soliciting of a person for the purpose of a commercial sex act; and any commercial sex activity involving the use of minors is also considered trafficking. There are four major truths in regards to trafficking - both human and sex trafficking. 1) Sex trafficking is not solely a gender based violence, men and boys are also affected, 2) victims include all races, sexual orientations, gender identities and income levels, 3) victims are controlled through measures such as assault, threats, false promises, isolation and debt (among other measures, and 4) there is no need for victims to be physically transported to be victimized. The Law of Armed Conflict (LOAC) identifies two types of armed conflict: *International Armed Conflict (IAC)* and *Non-International Armed Conflict (NIAC)*.² An *International Armed Conflict (IAC)* occurs when there is a conflict between states that requires the intervention of armed forces. *Non-International Armed Conflicts (NIAC)* are all other state conflicts that occur - for example, civil wars fall under a NIAC.

How do these two terms correlate with each other? Through preliminary research, I found that armed conflict helps sex trafficking to thrive in conflict inflicted areas. This is done through a number of means. First armed conflict occurs when there is a certain level of stress occurring in the state’s framework and by taking advantage of the broken framework, armed conflict then thrives and is able to take over the area. Using tactics that include threatening civilians and outright violence, armed groups are able to gain power in an area quickly. And though a foothold may have been created in which the armed group is now situated, they must have contingency plans in place to remain in power. The best way to rule through fear is by using civilians to their advantage, which is where trafficking would start to come into the

¹ Chuck Grassley, “S.1312 - 115th Congress (2017-2018): Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2017,” Congress.gov, December 21, 2018, <https://www.congress.gov/bill/115th-congress/senate-bill/1312>.

² Gary September 23 and Travis Normand December 9, “Types of Armed Conflicts,” The Law of Armed Conflict (LOAC), February 6, 2017, <https://loacblog.com/loac-basics/types-of-armed-conflicts/>.

equation. Armed groups use a couple different tactics of trafficking to enforce their authority such as marriage, child soldiers and using women and girls as sex slaves.

There is one final factor to take into account that explains why armed conflict and sex trafficking is so harmful - cultural norms and societal expectations regarding sex and modesty. The idea of the “respectability” of the middle class being linked to purity stems down from colonialism. There were particular rules that were established to emphasize the importance of respectability in a woman and traditions were restructured and reconstructed to create the ideal middle class woman as a symbol of purity. These ideals still persist today and much of religious nationalism relies on these very notions to continuously be upheld as political parties continue to remain in power.³ On the other side of the argument were men and the expectations that were placed on them to assume their roles of the heads of their respective households. The most important duty that was expected of them however, was the role as protector. They were expected to uphold the respectability and the purity of the women in their household and any damage that may occur to either status is a personal affront to their character. It wounds their pride and will only serve to highlight their shortcomings and cause doubt as to whether or not they are the right person to lead the household and be in power domestically. The leaders of armed groups recognize this, because as (usually they are at least) men, they are also the heads of their personal households and understand the humility that comes with being unable to protect their family members. Therefore, they know what weaknesses (ie the women) to take advantage of to hold on to their personal power.

Focusing on those who have been victimized by sexual exploitation specifically, armed groups use sexual slavery for multiple reasons. In Afghanistan, there were thematic findings in

³ Kumari Jayawardena and Malathi de Alwis, “Embodied Violence: Communalising Women's Sexuality in South Asia,” *Reproductive Health Matters* 4, no. 8 (1996): pp. 162-166, [https://doi.org/10.1016/s0968-8080\(96\)90372-9](https://doi.org/10.1016/s0968-8080(96)90372-9).

which many traffickers are involved in complex criminal networks aka armed groups.⁴ First leaders use the girls as incentive for their combatants, by using sex as an incentive to work harder and also strive to spread the group's message by any mean necessary, leaders will be able to have efficiently working combatants spreading terror and their ideologies and they will not have to deal with anybody starting a rebellion against them. Taking advantage of societal expectations of women and sex, armed groups will threaten any dissenters with the prospect of using their wives and daughters as sex slaves to be used by the combatants. They know that rather than risk the reputations of their family, dissenters will instead follow any demands made of them, and if they refuse, all it takes is a single example to be made and dissenters will quiet down. Aside from using them as incentives to encourage their combatants further, leaders are also able to sexually exploit their victims for financial gain. Setting up what is essentially prostitution rings in smaller areas under their control, the profits gained from this allows armed groups to finance expenses as well as obtain resources that they are otherwise unable to get. Examples include weapons of mass destruction, artillery, and even narcotics.

Argument

To restate my research question, I will be looking at the influence that armed groups have on trafficking in the conflict inflicted areas of South Asia. In order to fully comprehend the question and state a comprehensive explanation, I conducted studies into various case studies of the South Asian region. There was also broader research that I had conducted on the study of sex trafficking in general and possible causes behind why it occurs so frequently in these areas. After thorough research, I found that conflict inflicted areas create a certain level of instability that then creates vulnerabilities, such as poverty, which armed groups take advantage of in their quest for control. There are multiple vulnerabilities that occur due to conflict, whether it

⁴ Alys McAlpine, Mazedra Hossain, and Cathy Zimmerman, "Sex Trafficking and Sexual Exploitation in Settings Affected by Armed Conflicts in Africa, Asia and the Middle East: Systematic Review," *BMC International Health and Human Rights* 16, no. 1 (2016), <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12914-016-0107-x>.

occurs before or after the official start to a conflict does not matter. Regardless of their start date, these vulnerabilities still bring in the same result - trafficking of human bodies for nefarious purposes. The most common reason behind the general category of human trafficking has to do with narcotics and the sale and redistribution of such. And as I have stated previously, sex trafficking is a smaller subsection of human trafficking that affects women and girls at a disproportionate rate and is a major violation of human rights that affects the global community at tremendous rates.

Due to the topic of South Asian based sex trafficking being quite broad, case studies have been introduced to narrow down the criteria as well as allow readers to fully understand the topic without the fear of being lost in piles of research and unable to translate the data presented in this paper. These case studies were also chosen due to the fact that they hold prominence, both personally as well as in the international community, and as such will prove to be interesting studies to help aid me in my research and proposal of my findings.

Countries

I will be discussing two case studies in the paper; Post-Taliban Afghanistan and the disputed territory of Kashmir. These two case studies were chosen for a variety of reasons, but the most important reasoning behind these specific cases being chosen over others was that they would aid me in narrowing down a time frame as well as allowing me to choose the region of South Asia without it being too broad of a topic.

Post-Taliban Afghanistan

In the year 2001, the Taliban was finally ousted from power and now the Afghanistan government was finally able to restructure itself, with the help of the international community who would aid in the building of a legitimate governing institution. However, while the Taliban was no longer holding the government hostage, there were still Taliban strongholds throughout

the country in which the organization still ruled and abused their powers as they saw fit. These abuses included specific actions targeted against women and girls in an effort to halt potential progress made to improve their standing in society, whether that be through education or politics. In their effort the Taliban would either enforce regulations which would prohibit girls from attending school or even physically ensure that they [women] are unable to participate through physical harm inflicted on those who disobey their word.⁵

In order to discern and understand the post Taliban era that Afghanistan experienced in 2001 and the policies passed in that time, it is necessary to take a step back and learn about what occurred during the Taliban's reign and how women and girls suffered. During the Taliban's reign, they were able to disarm local warlords and instead imposed their own authoritarian regime instead, causing many to suffer as a result. One of the biggest edicts that were strictly enforced dealt with women and their place in society. Women were seen to be lesser than men and as a result needed the protection of a man, usually a father or husband, in order to even walk outside their home. Along with a strict dress code enforced by the threat of public beatings, women suffered deeply as a result. During instances where there was no other way to provide for their family, poverty and hunger became the cause for many women to be forced to become sex workers, and in an effort to end their prostitution, found themselves marrying members of the Taliban and becoming their wives instead. For those resisting the need to fall under the protection of a male and live under their possibly oppressive rule along with the Taliban's harsh regime, the threat of becoming known as a *Zanane bee Sarparast*,⁶ a derogatory term that means an "unprotect woman", who were cast out by their families and community, known as the poorest of the poor and afforded no rights or protection and thus suffered an immense amount.

⁵ Kenneth Katzman, "Afghanistan : Post-Taliban Governance, Security, and U.S. Policy / Kenneth Katzman.," *CRS Report for Congress*, 2015, https://doi.org/10.2458/azu_acku_pamphlet_ds371_4_k389_2015.

⁶ Elaheh Rostami Povey, "10. Women in Afghanistan: Passive Victims of the Borga or Active Social Participants?," *Development, Women and War*, 2004, pp. 172-187, <https://doi.org/10.3362/9780855987039.010>.

The members of the Taliban enjoyed exploiting the power imbalances that allowed them to commit these acts with no regard to any consequences for their actions for two reasons. The first being that because of their low social status women were unlikely to speak out against the regime and its action, at least publicly. The second reason is that the men are currently being emasculated as it becomes more and more apparent that they do not have the power to go against the regime, not without losing their own life and the lives of their family as a result. Considering the societal implications of the expectations of men and their duty as protectors of their family, it is apparent that by being unable to speak out, they are failing in their duty and must contend with the massive blow to their ego and pride as a result.

The Taliban was able to come into power and hold onto power after the Afghanistan civil war, which left the Afghanistan government in shambles as they were left with a rundown institution that would not have been able to perform their duties to protect their citizens. Seeing an opportunity, the Taliban came into power through the promise to restore law and order in the state, through the application of *shar'ia*.⁷ Faced with the prospect of having to continually suffer under human rights violations as they had in the past, or allow a new regime to take hold and hopefully change things for the better, the people allowed for the Taliban to take control rejoicing in the idea of having a stable government governing them again and knowing that foreign powers (including the United States) also backed this transition of power soothed any worries that may have popped up. The regime set up strict standards that were imposed on women, including but not limited to strict dress codes as well as curfews, that were enthusiastically enforced by young armed men who often would ignore the societal hierarchy when doing so. Thus presenting a double whammy for the population, because on one hand women and girls were dealing with a new level of oppression and on the other hand, non Taliban men were stripped of their power and forced to bow to the new standards. There was also the matter of

⁷ A. Wess Mitchell, "Between Hammer and Anvil," *The Grand Strategy of the Habsburg Empire*, January 2019, pp. 256-303, <https://doi.org/10.23943/princeton/9780691196442.003.0009>.

the trafficking of narcotics, and how women were a part of that system during the Taliban's regime. Due to societal beliefs, especially in rural areas, women are placed on a lower scale than men and as such would sometimes be sold as a way to pay off any debts that may have been incurred. Rather than be forced to pay off an exorbitant sum of money, the debtor will sell off the woman, usually a daughter or sister, to the debt collector and call it a marriage as a way to save face in the community. In a study of indebted drug traffickers from the province of Badakhshan, it was found that thirty two percent of the traffickers confirmed selling a female relative. The rates of which they were sold ranged from one thousand to four thousand dollars and a study conducted by the International Organisation for Migration confirmed that there is a growing human trafficking problem in Afghanistan, with victims typically drawn from among the destitute, the displaced and the indebted.

Kashmir

The disputed state of Kashmir has dealt with conflict since 1947, when the states of Pakistan and India won independence from Great Britain. The state has had to contend with several disputes occurring between the governments of Pakistan and India, with these violent disputes even leading to a threat of nuclear war. Due to the struggle for control of the territory, Kashmir's framework is unstable which allows for human rights violations, such as trafficking whether it be narcotics or human, to occur. Taking advantage of the many holes in the system, traffickers were able to set up their stations and use the instability to their advantage through setting up prostitution rings and brothels. In Kashmir, girls were not only kidnapped for the purpose of prostitution, but there were often times when their poor parents would sell them to feed the rest of the family.⁸ There is a large amount of stress placed on the family to survive in the conflict inflicted state, and with unresolved issues causing insecurities families were

⁸ Chesfeeda Akhtar, "Eve Teasing as a Form of Violence against Women: A Case Study of District Srinagar, Kashmir," *International Journal of Sociology and Anthropology* 5, no. 5 (2013): pp. 168-178, <https://doi.org/10.5897/ijasa2013.0445>.

sometimes forced to do the unthinkable. Traffickers also recognize the hardships that many families are faced with as a result of the conflict and take advantage of this by offering the families an alternative explanation, so as to ease any guilty consciences. By telling parents that their daughter will instead be “married”, traffickers will be able to fully convince the parents that they are indeed doing the right thing and assure themselves that they are simply ensuring that their child will be able to live a better life than the one that they are in currently. The truth of the matter is that while some girls may find themselves victims of “child marriages”, many others are instead sold to brothels to be abused by hundreds, if not thousands of abusers looking for sexual gratification.

There has been some effort made by the government of India to address the security issues caused by trafficking such as the amended Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act of 1978 that stressed the prevention, instead of suppression, of human trafficking and also took into consideration the international conventions and protocols and thus provided severe penalties that correspond with various exploitative conditions.⁹ The main focus of the Act are under age girls, since there appears to be a lucrative market in which they are a commodity. It is also necessary to point out that due to rising tensions between the states of Pakistan and India, military personnel are stationed in Kashmir and Jammu to ensure that there are no outward declarations of violence. This correlates with the sexual exploitation of young (re underage) girls due to the increasing demand of them in Jammu and Kashmir as the concentration of military personnel in the area have increased over the recent years. As the increase in demand for prostitutes continues, one would think that there would be more of an uproar due to the sexual exploitation of so many young women. Unfortunately, there has been a mass under reporting of girls trafficked into sex work. There are several factors to explain the reason behind this, the first being that the police and other authorities often regard the girls as “missing” instead of

⁹ Biswajit Ghosh, “Trafficking in Women and Children in India: Nature, Dimensions and Strategies for Prevention,” *The International Journal of Human Rights* 13, no. 5 (2009): pp. 716-738.

“trafficked” which then affects any possible searches conducted since they will not be using the same criteria to help them. The second main reason would be that the family members, such as parents, or siblings, will give their consent to the girls being taken away so that they will be able to make lucrative earnings, with little complaints until the flow of money has ceased and all communications with the girls have been cut off. The biggest reason however, is that the traffickers are resourceful. As mentioned earlier, traffickers are able to find out just what tricks to use depending on the family’s situation to convince the family to hand over the girl with little to no complaints made. And by the time the family understands the true severity of the situation, the trafficker and the girls are long gone, and there is little hope that the family will be reunited again. Due to the difficulties in determining trafficking cases, the data provided by the authorities and the state are compromised to a certain extent. It’s necessary to not only look into cases in which narcotics or prostitution have been involved, but also cases in which child “marriages” have occurred or sudden lucrative job opportunities have been offered.

Research

The case studies of Post Taliban Afghanistan and Kashmir reveal the conflicts and the conditions that allowed for this violence targeted towards women and girls to occur. The conflict that each state dealt with highlighted the incompetencies at play and just how woefully unprepared authorities can be in their attempts to rectify the situation. As Kashmir showed, the details were what allowed traffickers to continue their work, and with the authorities solely conducting searches based on previous criteria that they had and not allowing for other criteria to be included as a way to broaden the search, they hinder the rescue rather than aid. What this shows is that the very vulnerabilities present in the framework that have been allowed by the government have been taken advantage of by armed groups which then leads to an increase to the number of victims of trafficking. In the case of Post Taliban Afghanistan, the problem is rooted to the pre Taliban era where the state’s framework was already damaged to the point

where the Taliban was easily able to gain power and control over the state through promises of restoring structure to the war ridden country. And while there was not as much disruption wrecking the country, the Taliban introduced a new form of violence that terrorized the state and its people till their fall from power in 2001. The group was able to establish complete dominance first through the semi reparation of the state - and I only say that the reparation was semi complete because the weaknesses found were removed and replaced with policies that benefited their group. They were then able to retain power through the observance of cultural norms and the use of brutal enforcement to force their enemies to yield to their almighty power. The main vulnerabilities found and used to further their power were socioeconomic as well as gender vulnerabilities that are in direct correlation to cultural norms set by the community and its expectations.

The case of Kashmir is a little less comprehensible to examine, mainly due to the fact that the main conflict of the territory is - just barely - unofficial. For while there have been violence occurring throughout the country since Pakistan and India won independence from Great Britain, there have been no official attacks which then changes data found. Changes include the criteria used to differentiate trafficking cases from missing persons cases, as well as the level of violence that the victims face. There is also the matter of the profit made off of the sexual exploitation of these girls and where it is funded to. Therefore a slightly different approach was taken with this case, in which the search criteria of cases were broadened so as to include missing persons reports. As mentioned before, the authorities are quick to rule out instances in which it appears to be a missing person and do not often think to potentially classify the situation as a trafficked person, especially in the rural areas where the families are not as financially secure. It was quickly apparent that due to the turmoil that the ensuing violence between the two governments there was much insecurity in the territory, and that caused further cracks in an already unstable institution. The added stress of outside military personnel coming in to ensure a moderate level of peace only added to the stress due to concerns over the

attitudes of the personnel and any altercations between them and dissenting locals. As a result, insecurities, from job insecurity to fragile gender insecurity, worsened and just as vultures do, traffickers picked up on them and used them for profit. Recognizing the antiquated notions of girls being less valuable than boys, many rural families see them as extra mouths to feed and look to either marry them off as soon as possible or force them to find a job to help support the family. Traffickers will then come to the family, usually the head of the household, with a lucrative offer - usually an offer of marriage that will ensure the girl will live well or a lucrative job offer that will allow her to send enough money back home that any objections will then quieten. That these traffickers will specifically target underage girls due to their naivety and the profit that they bring due to the demand that they will bring in. Kashmir also has the uniqueness in its case due to the fact that the military personnel that have been brought in to aid with the Pakistan versus India conflict are also accomplices to the issue of trafficking. Due to their visiting brothels and other sexual institutions they only continue to encourage this behavior rather than discourage it.

Now where do I fit in this equation? As I have mentioned multiple times throughout the paper, vulnerability of the state is a common denominator that was found in the two countries. Whether or not the vulnerability was socioeconomic or gender based does not matter because the bottom line is that the vulnerability of the state was taken advantage of to further the cause of the armed group. Through my research I was able to find that the trafficking of women and girls have been partially funding the very armed groups that are behind the conflict that has been terrorizing these aforementioned areas. The victims and the groups are intertwined in a number of ways, the most obvious one being that they are sexually abusing these girls for their own sexual gratification and to fulfill a need to exercise control over a submissive - this is usually done more so by the lower level of combatants who still need to climb the inner ranks in order to exercise power over others. The girls are also sold to be married to Taliban members as a way to reward them for their work and to encourage combatants to continue fighting for the

chance to also be recognized and rewarded, while the girls will be sold the idea of marriage as protection and peace from the sex work that they have been traumatized with. The final way that the two are intertwined is what the profit of the sex work offers the armed groups - mainly the financial support. Considering that there are a few members of the local authority aware of the trafficking and the sex work occurring in the towns, it is also safe to assume that these corrupt members are taking some sort of monetary "donation" to look the other way. Taking advantage of the local leaders' corruptness, armed groups will either continue to bribe the leaders or even blackmail over past bribes that have been accepted to look the other way over the more "shady" delegations that the group have seen fit to send out. They will also use the corruptness to their advantage to be able to buy arms for their combatants through the black market, using the girls as a form of payment - whether it is simply their services or the girls themselves depends on the quantity needed. As I found during my research, in one area of Kashmir, an underage girl of 15 and younger was worth anywhere from \$1000 to \$4000, and that is more than enough money to buy artillery to supply the local forces who can then continue to enforce your will. And as the demand for girls increases, more and more will find themselves duped into the trafficking ring and the cycle will only continue, because as long as these armed groups find themselves with any modicum of power, they will continue to use the victims until their use has dissipated, in which case they will find themselves discarded, possibly through marriage but more often than not dead.

Implications

Sex trafficking is a phenomenon that affects millions of people worldwide. And as previously stated, does not simply affect developing countries, but also world leaders such as the United States of America - granted it is on a much smaller scale in comparison. Now according to the IJM Casework Series, Human trafficking makes up to \$150 billion dollars a year, two-thirds of which is due to sex trafficking. That is still \$100 billion dollars which is no

small sum in any means, the profit being larger than the GDP of numerous countries. The general sum of the profit will be divided up into different areas, and assumably the majority of which will end up in the pockets of those in charge, once the upkeep and other fees have been taken out. It would be obvious to mention all of the other ways that this money could be used to improve the country's inner structure, but that would honestly be redundant.

Trafficking does not just affect victims while they are still embroiled in the operation, but continues to affect and hurt them after they have escaped - because no one is able to willingly leave if they choose to do so. Along with psychological trauma that survivors acquire such as Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), or panic attacks linked to the abuses they faced, or physical disabilities such as sexually transmitted diseases/ infections (STD/STI) or even loss of limbs as a result of punishments incurred; victims of sex trafficking find that there are also cultural trauma that they must also contend with for the rest of their lives. The South Asian community is typically quite conservative regarding the topic of sex and though matters such as this will not be discussed publicly, there will still be a backlash that the victims have to face. It does not matter if they were forced or not, the community shuns those that they see as promiscuous and will shun these victims if/when they choose to return home. The community shunning that they have to face every day hinders any possible progress that they make. As a result some may find themselves finding unhealthy coping mechanisms such as alcohol or drugs, or may even find themselves becoming sex workers since that is all they may know at this point.

Trafficking victims typically are targeted for a number of reasons, whether it is because they were already a part of the sex trade or if they were lured in through deception, the most common one being a lucrative job offer. This can truly only occur so frequently when the state's framework is damaged. Conflict is able to thrive when the state's structure is fractured and until it is fixed, will only continue to prosper and thrive. Therefore, it does not matter how many programs will be set in place to aid victims, as long as the framework is still fractured then past

patterns will continue. The state's main focus when creating aid for victims should be the framework and fixing what internal problems show up. Conflict is also able to take advantage of the fractured framework, especially because these frameworks are probably the reason why the conflict in the area has escalated to the point that it did. One also has to think about the global implications with broken frameworks that are being taken advantage of during times of conflict. Since this is a global phenomenon, then no country can claim that they are free from this issue. It is only fair to assume then that there is a common factor in play that allows for trafficking to remain at large. World leaders need to acknowledge the failings in the system and work towards fixing these shortcomings.

Because of the massive human rights violations that trafficking brings to the community, it is necessary to be aware of the repeating variables that occur universally. By highlighting the vulnerabilities that these variables create, it will make it easier for the state to repair its framework and improve human security issues that continue to arise. The most common factors that are commonly found in trafficking cases can be broken down into two main components: the constitution of a vulnerable population and the conditions that create a vulnerability.¹⁰ The components of a vulnerable population are further broken down into three categories: age, gender and (in some instances) marriage practices. Age is an important fact due to the sexual preferences of the abusers, because of the fear of contracting HIV/AIDS or other sexually transmitted diseases many prefer young children or virgins as their victims. And due to the effects of armed conflict many children have found themselves vulnerable to sexual exploitation. Gender is the second component of a vulnerable population for the reason that conditions have been created due to cultural and economic factors that make the trafficking of women easier and more profitable for the traffickers. The last component is tied to gender which is marriage practices and the cultural traditions that cause women insecurities. Marriages are not only seen

¹⁰ Michele Anne Clark, "Trafficking in Persons: An Issue of Human Security," *Journal of Human Development* 4, no. 2 (2003): pp. 247-263, <https://doi.org/10.1080/1464988032000087578>.

as an additional security for women, they are also used as an excuse for families to have one less mouth to feed since they will no longer be considered responsible for their daughter and have to foot the costs necessary to raise her. Then there are the conditions of vulnerability in which the components include organized crime, civil war and political unrest and finally social and cultural vulnerabilities. Organized crime thrives in political instability and usually when their regime is under threat of removal, governments are so focused on its own survival that they disregard protecting most others, including its citizens. Governments will also focus their energy towards ensuring that the threat of organized crime has been vanquished and will focus on the key actors, rather than the consequences that occur, such as trafficking. Civil war and political unrest also fall under the reasoning as organized crime, since conflict takes up the majority of a government's attention and energy which allows for traffickers to fall through the cracks.

Conclusion

As I conclude this paper, I find it important to restate a few facts made throughout the article. First, is that conflict thrives in the vulnerability of the state, the vulnerability is what first allowed conflict to generate and vulnerability is what allows it to fester and thrive. The second fact is that the framework of the state acknowledges its vulnerabilities, however, they are focused on other agendas and therefore allow the vulnerabilities to deepen, further cracking the framework and weakening the state. Traffickers can recognize the advantages that are at their disposal and often take advantage of them, from cultural norms which help them choose which victim is best fit for what they have planned to the understanding that the framework being damaged allows them to essentially get away with their actions with little to no consequences. The most obvious solution to this dilemma is by repairing the framework so that this is an issue no longer, but realistically this solution can potentially take generations to solve properly. Rather than work from the state level down to the local level, I propose doing the opposite. By generating change in the smaller more rural areas, through the broadening of the criteria of a

trafficking case to the attitudes targeted to the vulnerable populations i.e. women and girls, enough support should be garnered that the state will be able to see some actual change. I understand that there will be pushback against change and that there are other limiting factors in play, however it is my hope that the smallest of changes can create the biggest impact.

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